Inadequacy of entitlement officers to Export House

2396. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federaion of Indian Export Organisations has drawn the attention of Government to the utter inadequacy of the entitlement offered to Government recognised export houses, trading houses under the Special Licenecs Scheme;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government propose to liberalise the Import Licence Scheme to encourage exports/imports; and

(d) if so, by when and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Review of the Export and Import Policy is a continuous process and changes in the policies are made as and when considered necessary.

Government decision to join Regional Trading Blocks

2397. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to join regional trading blocks by giving recognition to the prevailing trends in the world trading system;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have decided to join Association of South East Asian Nations for trading; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There is no proposal for India to join a regional trading bloc.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal for India seeking membership of the ASEAN. Both India and ASEAN have however, decided upon establishing a sectoral djalogue relationship covering such areas as trading, investment and tourism. The aim of this exercise is to promote trade and economic exchanges between the two sides within the Multilateral Trading System established under the GATT.

India prefers the multilateral to the regional approach. Our efforts have been to strengthen multilateralism during the Uruguary Round as it is believed that non-discriminatory trade offers the greatest promises for expansion of world trade.

Report of study group on price of Natural Rubber

2398. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Goverment had set up a study group to make recommendations regarding fixation of price of Natural Rubber;

(b) if so, whether the report has been submitted to Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have fixed the remunerative price of rubber recently in the light of the recommendations of the study group;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(g) what is the time by which the remunerative price of rubber on the basis of the recommendations of the study group is proposed to be fixed?